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Novembe r

Around four o'clock O. S,, a young German, comes to call. I remember, or rather he reminds me, that he is the author of a book (rather mediocre), *Lothar,* which I read or skimmed through last spring on the recommendation of Felix-Paul Greve. I believe I even wrote him a note about it. . . . O. S. not at all unpleasant, but talking too much, like all foreigners (moreover, those who don't talk are even more tiresome). He praises my *Immoraliste,* adding that those who admire it have hardly understood it, that people always speak of me as a lyric writer, failing to appreciate my chief virtue, which is knowing how "to look through the cracks of culture/* That's not bad at all!

I have just read, first to myself, then aloud, the extraordinary Sixth *Chant de Maldoror* (chapters i, ii, and iii).[85] How does it happen that I didn't know it until now? I have even begun to wonder if I am not *the only one* to have noticed it, "You feel as you draw toward the end of the volume that he is gradually losing consciousness . . ." writes Gourmont. Let's admit that he *never read* these pages; that is less insulting to Gourmont than to suppose that he read them without noticing them.

Here is something that excites me to the point of delirium. He leaps from the detestable to the excellent. Amazing, the exchange of letters between Maldoror and Mervyn, the description of the family dining-room, the figure of the Commodore, the little brothers, "their caps topped off with a feather torn from the wing of the Carolina fern-owl, with their velvet trousers ending at the knees, and their red silk stockings/* who "take each other's hand and go into the drawing-room, taking care to touch the ebony parquet only with the tips of their toes," etc. . . . etc. . . . I must read it all to Copeau. What

mastery in the "sheer cussedness" of these lines.

Immediately afterward I reread Rimbaud's *Podtes de sept* ans.[88] Then in Gourmont's book of *Masques* the few pages on Lautr£amont and the ones on Rimbaud, which are a painful disgrace.[37] (Those on Lautreamont are sadly insufficient.)

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November

Morning at the Louvre; delightful morning. I had a little Montaigne with me, but read it only occasionally, while walking, and just enough to fan my mind's joyful enthusiasm. Went into Picard's to buy the *Syn-*

[35] By Isidore Ducasse, who took the pen-name of Count de Lautreamont The now famous *Maldoror,* first published in 1869, was recognized as a work of genius by L6on Bloy and Remy de Gourmont in the early nineties and popularized by the surrealists in the 1920's.

[36] Rimbaud's poem "The Seven-Year-Old Poets" describes the revolts and visions of childhood.

[87] These pages are not found in the recent editions. [A.]